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on 28 June 1955. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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WEST GERMANY AND THE REUNIFICATION ISSUE

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable West German popular and government attitudes toward various solutions which may be proposed in the forthcoming four-power negotiations,¹ and the policies of the West German government over the next year or two consequent upon these negotiations.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Underlying West German reactions to recent and possible future Soviet moves on Germany are such basic attitudes and aspirations as concern for security, anti-Communism, and desire for reunification. Most West Germans believe that reunification must not be bought at the price of security. (*Para. 10*)

2. Although most West Germans remain skeptical of Soviet willingness to offer unification on acceptable terms, recent Soviet moves have created an atmosphere of cautious hope that the Soviets will make new and more attractive proposals on the German question. (*Para. 14*)

3. We believe that West Germany would almost certainly desire to accept a Soviet proposal for reunification, even on terms of neutralization which barred German membership in military alliances, if the proposal included provisions for: (a) withdrawal of Soviet forces and controls

from East Germany; (b) genuinely free all-German elections; (c) permission to rearm substantially; (d) a security system which left NATO intact, even though without German participation; and (e) the continued presence of US military power in Europe. The Bonn government might reject a reunification and neutralization proposal if it required formal renunciation of claims to the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line. (*Para. 22*)

4. If reunification was achieved on the above terms, the West Germans probably would believe that they would be adequately protected, since the NATO powers still would be required—and indeed would feel compelled in their own self-interest—to provide assistance in the event that Germany were attacked. Finally, in our view many Germans would consider that they could not be kept permanently neutralized and that eventually Germany could maneuver out of such a restriction if national interests so required. (*Para. 23*)

¹ Except for the long range projection in Section VI, which is taken from NIE 23-54, the discussion in this paper is limited to the period prior to the 1957 West German election.

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5. Any scheme which appeared to confirm the division of Germany for an extended period would be regarded unfavorably by the West Germans. However, if the West Germans became convinced that reunification was not attainable, they might tolerate a two-Germanys proposal which provided for the withdrawal of Soviet forces since they would estimate that such a step would lead to the collapse of the East German regime and eventually to a united free Germany. The West Germans probably would be willing to accept the withdrawal of Allied forces, if assured that (a) such forces could be redeployed to contiguous areas, and (b) West Germany would be allowed an acceptable level of armament. (*Paras. 25-26*)

6. Although the West German people are inclined to feel little sense of urgency over the development of their military forces, the Bonn government plans to press for initiation of the rearmament program in order to improve its bargaining position and to demonstrate West Germany's good faith in its treaty obligations. However, once the defense program has been initiated by the establishment of volunteer cadres, West Germany will probably proceed cautiously with the

conscription program prior to the 1957 election. (*Paras. 28-29*)

7. A failure to achieve German reunification in the forthcoming negotiations probably would have little impact on West German domestic politics and foreign policy, provided that the Adenauer government and its Allies appeared to have made sincere efforts to reach an agreement and to have failed because of continued Soviet intransigence. (*Para. 30*)

8. In a reunified Germany moderate political parties would almost certainly predominate. The chances are better than even that the center-right parties would emerge strong enough to form the post-unification government. At the same time, the chances for a "grand coalition" of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats would be increased. (*Para. 33*)

9. We believe that for some years a neutralized Germany probably would feel compelled by treaty restrictions and pressing internal problems to maintain an independent role between the two great power blocs. However, it is unlikely that Germany's foreign policy would long remain on dead center, and we believe that in time it would gravitate toward the West. (*Paras. 34-35*)

DISCUSSION

I. BASIC WEST GERMAN ATTITUDES AND ASPIRATIONS

10. Underlying West German reactions to recent and possible future Soviet moves on Germany are such basic attitudes and aspirations as concern for security, anti-Communism, and desire for reunification. The West Germans are greatly concerned with the preservation of their security. Soviet policy in

the postwar period has led most West Germans to realize that any Soviet proposals on unification are designed to effect the withdrawal of NATO forces from Germany and to weaken or destroy the Western alliance. Most West Germans believe that reunification must not be bought at the price of security; uncertainty about continued US willingness to insure the security of West Germany would generate fear of abandonment.

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11. Another basic attitude in West Germany is one of vigorous anti-Communism and distrust of the USSR. There is virtually no support for the Communist Party among the West Germans, and they have shown no disposition to accept any reunification formula which would give the USSR the right to intervene in internal German affairs or would assign the German Communists a position of power. Nor is there any widespread opinion in West Germany favoring direct negotiations which would involve recognition of the East German regime. At the same time there is a feeling of identification with Western ideals and interests. The West Germans consider the recent acceptance of the Bonn republic as an equal member of the Western community to be a hard-won achievement which few of them would lightly discard. Adenauer's continued strong popular support, confirmed in recent local elections, indicates that a majority of West Germans back his pro-Western policy and share his mistrust of the USSR.

12. The reunification of Germany is a basic objective for which most West Germans would be prepared to make sacrifices. During the past decade this objective frequently has been overshadowed by preoccupation with such other important objectives as economic rehabilitation and the recovery of sovereignty and equal status among the Western nations. Under the impact of repeated Soviet refusals to accept or offer any satisfactory basis for unity, the emotional demand for reunification has been tempered by a mood of popular resignation to the prolonged division of the nation. Nevertheless, the desire for the reconstitution of a complete German national state remains basic in the German people.

13. Neutralism, defined as aloofness toward both the Communist and Western causes, is not a basic attitude in West Germany. However, to achieve unification a considerable number of West Germans would be strongly tempted to accept neutrality, i.e., voluntary absence from formal alliances with East or West. Few favor neutralization in the sense of neutrality enforced and guaranteed by outside powers. The Adenauer government rejects all such concepts, and the major-

ity of the Bundestag agrees with the Chancellor's conviction that the neutralization of Germany, whether armed or unarmed, would critically endanger German security and prevent the realization of German foreign policy aspirations.

II. WEST GERMAN REACTIONS TO RECENT SOVIET MOVES

14. *Impact on public opinion.* The reorientation of Soviet policy toward Austria and Yugoslavia, the invitation to Adenauer to visit Moscow, and other recent Soviet moves have created in West Germany an atmosphere of cautious hope that the Soviets will make new and more attractive proposals on the German question. The West Germans remain highly skeptical of Soviet willingness to offer unification on acceptable terms. They do not consider the Austrian solution applicable to Germany. However, the West Germans appear to view the Soviet actions as evidencing at least temporary flexibility and as confirming the validity of Adenauer's policies. They hope that four-power talks will result in a further relaxation of tensions and lay the groundwork for a solution to the German problem. The West Germans believe that the Western Powers should take immediate advantage of the present atmosphere to probe Soviet intentions. They are greatly concerned lest the problem of reunification lose its high priority during four-power discussions of disarmament, collective security, and other issues.

15. *The Bonn government's attitude toward four-power negotiations.* The Adenauer government is somewhat more reserved than the West German public concerning the possibility of Soviet concessions on the German question. In essence, the Chancellor and many of his colleagues feel that only after West Germany has rearmed and can negotiate from a greater position of strength will the USSR be likely to agree to unification on terms acceptable to the West Germans. Adenauer is convinced also that West Germany lacks the stature to play an independent role between East and West and that continued Western support is vital to German security vis-à-vis the USSR.

16. Adenauer continues to assert that the West Germans can only maintain their economic prosperity and achieve unification in freedom through membership in a strong Western alliance. He rejects in advance any European security pact which would forbid German participation in the Western alliance and would require the withdrawal of US forces from Europe. The Chancellor insists that, in return for free all-German elections, the Western negotiators should make no concessions which would jeopardize German security.

17. Despite Adenauer's skepticism over the prospects for early reunification, he has been careful to seize the initiative from his domestic critics on this issue. He has sought to counter fears that the West, in the process of negotiating a détente with the USSR, might lose sight of German aspirations. He has consistently maintained that German reunification is basic to any easing of world tensions. The Chancellor has reacted to the recent Soviet moves by seeking to keep the reunification issue in the forefront of Western policy considerations. He insists on full West German participation in preparation of Western positions concerning the German question.

18. Both the government and West German public hope that the West will adopt a more flexible position in the forthcoming negotiations than at the Berlin Conference in 1954. In particular the Chancellor recognizes that the USSR must be offered some reassurances in return for German unity. Adenauer's recommendations probably will include an elaboration of his 1953 proposal that German reunification be accompanied by a European security system, including the US and the USSR, based on limited armament, mutual assistance, nonaggression guarantees, and the exclusion of the use of force for territorial changes.

19. These positions are generally held by the government parties. However, some members of the lesser parties in the governing coalition, largely motivated by political opportunism, have from time to time advocated compromises with the USSR or East Germany. A few leaders of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and Refugee Party (BHE) fall into

this category, although in the Bundestag both parties usually give their voting strength to the Chancellor.

20. *Current SPD position.* Despite German entry into NATO, the opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) still contends that reunification must not be subordinated to German rearmament in alliance with the West. The SPD position reflects a combination of ideological antimilitarism and opposition to Catholic influences in the Adenauer cabinet. It also reflects the belief that if Germany were reunited, the large Protestant population and traditional SPD strength in the East would improve the party's political prospects. The party considers that the alignment of West Germany with NATO was premature and that it constitutes an obstacle to unification. It opposes German alliance with either power bloc and favors the creation of an all-European security system in which a reunified Germany would be made secure by its own military forces and by nonaggression guarantees. The SPD leadership points to the Austrian treaty as proof of its thesis that reunification may be the reward for nonaffiliation with either power bloc. However, despite opportunistic SPD efforts to capitalize on sentiment for unification, the SPD leaders are not unmindful of German security requirements. The SPD agrees with the government that there can be no formal recognition of the East German regime, although it contends that more extensive informal contacts between the two Germanys should be developed. However, neither the SPD nor the dissidents of the political right have been able to develop popular and coherent alternatives to the Chancellor's policies.

III. WEST GERMAN ATTITUDES TOWARD POSSIBLE SOVIET PROPOSALS

21. The reunification formula which West Germany would prefer would involve genuinely free all-German elections and post-treaty freedom of alliance. However, the West Germans do not believe it likely that the USSR will offer such terms, and they consider the only alternatives to be (a) reunification and neutralization, or (b) continuation of the division of Germany.

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22. *Unification and neutralization.* We believe that West Germany would almost certainly desire to accept a Soviet proposal for reunification, even on terms of neutralization which barred German membership in military alliances, if the proposal included provisions for: (a) withdrawal of Soviet forces and controls from East Germany; (b) genuinely free all-German elections; (c) permission to rearm substantially; (d) a security system which left NATO intact, even though without German participation; and (e) the continued presence of US military power in Europe. The Bonn government might reject a reunification and neutralization proposal if it required formal renunciation of claims to the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line.

23. If reunification was achieved on the above terms, the West Germans probably would believe that they would be adequately protected, since the NATO powers still would be required — and indeed would feel compelled in their own self-interest — to provide assistance in the event that Germany were attacked. Finally, in our view many Germans would consider that they could not be kept permanently neutralized and that eventually Germany could maneuver out of such a restriction if national interests so required.

24. *Continued division of Germany.* The USSR may press for limitations on the armament of both parts of Germany, under the aegis of an all-European security system, coupled with the reduction or withdrawal of Allied and Soviet forces from Germany. Such a proposal would be presented as only a "temporary" arrangement and would probably include recommendations that unification negotiations be continued between the two Germans.

25. Any scheme which appeared to confirm the division of Germany for an extended period would be regarded unfavorably by the West Germans. Nor would they be likely to accept any proposal involving negotiations with the East Germans which might be considered as recognition of the legitimacy and permanence of the East German regime. Many West Germans would feel that a regu-

larization of the position of East Germany would freeze the status quo and make difficult the subsequent realization of reunification.

26. If the West Germans became convinced that reunification was not attainable at this stage, they might tolerate a two-Germans proposal which provided for the withdrawal of Soviet forces since they would estimate that such a step would lead to the collapse of the East German regime and eventually to a united free Germany. The West Germans probably would be willing to accept the withdrawal of Allied forces, if assured that (a) such forces could be redeployed to contiguous areas, and (b) West Germany would be allowed an acceptable level of armament.

27. *Domestic political impact of Soviet proposals.* Considering that most West Germans remain skeptical of a genuine shift in Soviet policy on the German question, we believe it unlikely that any Soviet proposal short of that described in paragraph 22 above would have a significant impact on West Germany's internal political situation. The cohesion of the present government will not be seriously threatened as long as the West Germans believe that the Western negotiators and Adenauer are demonstrating positive willingness to give full consideration to unification. Even the death of Adenauer would be unlikely to result in major changes in internal political alignments or foreign policy, so long as there did not appear to be a workable alternative to West Germany's participation in NATO.

IV. REARMAMENT

28. In general the West German people are inclined to feel little sense of urgency over the development of their own military forces. This attitude stems from popular reluctance to accept the personal sacrifices involved in rearmament, from growing concern over the possible political influence of the new military establishment, and from some feeling that West German forces would be insignificant in comparison with the vast capabilities of the US and the USSR. This attitude has probably been intensified in the atmosphere of reduced tensions. The Bonn government, on the other hand, as a means both of demonstra-

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ting West Germany's good faith in its treaty obligations, and of dealing with the unification issue from a position of strength, plans to press for initiation of the rearmament program simultaneously with the four-power negotiations. The SPD has unsuccessfully urged a delay in implementing the program, but its top leaders are cooperating in formulation of defense legislation in order to insure civilian control of the military and to prevent a rebirth of militaristic tendencies.

29. A majority of the West German people and of the Bundestag agree with Adenauer that the initiation of rearmament will strengthen West Germany's negotiating position. It is also widely recognized that some degree of rearmament is essential for security under any likely solution of the German question. Under these circumstances it seems unlikely that further negotiations on the German question, even if protracted, would by themselves lead to a slowdown in the pace of West German rearmament. However, once the defense program has been initiated by the establishment of volunteer cadres, West Germany will probably proceed cautiously with the conscription program prior to the 1957 election.

V. WEST GERMAN POLICY ASSUMING NO AGREEMENT ON REUNIFICATION

30. If the Adenauer government and its three Western Allies appeared to have made sincere efforts to reach an agreement on reunification and to have failed because of continued Soviet intransigence, their failure probably would have little impact on West Germany's domestic politics or foreign policy. In view of the widespread doubt that an acceptable unification formula can now be reached, such a failure probably would cause no more disappointment than similar negative results in the past. Bonn would be confirmed in its view that only after West Germany had achieved a position of rearmed strength within NATO would it be able to reopen the reunification issue with any hope of forcing concessions from the USSR.

31. West Germany probably would be willing to establish diplomatic relations with the

USSR and to increase its trade with the Sino-Soviet Bloc. The Bonn government also would be likely to take various independent initiatives to explore the prisoner of war issue with the USSR and to accept broader de facto relations with East Germany. However, it would still be reluctant to engage in direct reunification talks with the East German regime which it regards as a Soviet puppet. The West Germans might undertake direct discussions on reunification with Moscow but would be careful to keep the Western Allies informed.

32. Assuming four-power agreement, with Bonn's concurrence, on an interim solution embodying limitation of the armament of the two Germanys under some all-European security agreement, the internal political repercussions and subsequent West German policy probably would not vary materially from that described in paragraphs 30-31.

VI. POLITICAL COMPLEXION AND FOREIGN POLICY OF A REUNIFIED AND NEUTRALIZED GERMANY

33. In a reunified Germany moderate political parties would almost certainly predominate. Once free elections were held the East German Communist Party would almost certainly be overwhelmed. Although the SPD would probably gain political strength through the accession of East Germany, the chances are better than even that the center-right parties would emerge strong enough to form the post-unification government. At the same time, the chances for a CDU-SPD "grand coalition" would be increased. A government of either complexion would be strongly anti-Communist.

34. As we have estimated previously,² we believe that for some years a neutralized Germany probably would feel compelled by treaty restrictions and pressing internal problems to maintain an independent role between the two great power blocs. A reunified Germany would be confronted with a multitude of internal economic and administrative problems and would be forced to cope with these diffi-

² NIE 23-54, "Probable Developments in West Germany," dated 20 December 1954.

culties before undertaking a more active foreign policy. Germany would also desire to rearm to levels authorized by four-power agreement.

35. However, it is unlikely that Germany's foreign policy would long remain on dead center, and we believe that in time it would gravitate toward the West rather than the USSR. We believe that fundamentally the Germans would consider that: (a) the chief threat to

their security still lay in the power and aggressive designs of the USSR; (b) the conflicts of interest between them and the Soviet Bloc were greater than those with the Western Powers; and (c) their opportunities for a larger world power role would be greater as a leading member of a Western European coalition than as a "junior partner" of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, we believe that the orientation of a reunified Germany would be toward the West.

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